

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-12
MCE-00 AID-05 EB-08 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /103 W
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P R 010644Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8645
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION USNATO
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WASHDC
CINCUSNAVEUR
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5193

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS IR US NL GW
SUBJ: US WEAPONS SUITES FOR IIN FRIGATES

REF: TEHRAN 5173, DTG 311100Z MAY 78

1. DUTCH AMBASSADOR CAMPAGNE CALLED ON ME MAY 25 TO DISCUSS
IIN FRIGATE PROGRAM. HE ESSENTIALLY REHEARSED REPORTS CON-
TAINED IN RECENT TELEGRAMS FROM DEPARTMENT AND THE HAGUE,
UNDERSCORING ESSENTIALLY TO DUTCH SHIPYARDS TO GET AT
LEAST LARGE PORTION OF IRANIAN FRIGATE BUY, DESIRABILITY
OF GETTING UNDER CONTRACT SOON, AND THA GOI WOULD NOT
MAKE FINAL DISISION UNTIL CLEAR ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF
ACQUIRING US WEAPONS SUITES AND COMMUNICATION ITEMS
CAMPAGNE ALSO POINTED OUT DUTCH UNDERSTANING OF GOI
INTENTION TO SPLIT FRIGATE PROGRAM INTO TWO PARTS;
8 FRIGATES WILL BE IN THE FIRST TRANCHE, AND 4 MORE,
AT A LATER DATE, WILL COMPRISE THE SECOND. CAMPAGNE
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WAS INITIALLY CONVINCED THAT SUCH A TWO BITE APPROACH
WOULD MAKE POSITIVE USG DECISION EASIER BECAUSE OF
ARMS TRANSFER CEILING CONSIDERATIONS. IT WAS POINTED
OUT TO HIM THAT IF WE AGREE TO US EQUIPMENT FOR THE
IIN FRIGATES OVER SEVERAL YEARS. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT A
LARGER PURCHASE MIGHT EVEN HELP TIMING CONSIDERATIONS
FOR THE SHIPYARD CONSTRUCTING THE FRIGATES, SINCE IT

MIGHT ENABLE A SECOND PRODUCTION LINE OR SOME ARRANGEMENT TO EXPEDITE THE MARK 13 LAUNCHER, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND IS THE CRITICAL PACING ITEM AMONG THE US EQUIPMENT.

2. AMBASSADOR CAMPAGNE ASKED ME WHAT INFORMATION WE HAD FROM WASHINGTON ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE IRANIAN REQUEST, AND I REPLIED THAT WE HAD NO WORD THAT A DECISION HAD YET BEEN REACHED; THE MATTER WAS STILL APPARENTLY UNDER REVIEW. CAMPAGNE SAID DUTCH WERE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED BECAUSE DUTCH CNO WOULD VISIT IRAN EARLY IN JUNE, AND DISCUSSIONS WITH GOI WERE FAR ENOUGH ALONG SO THAT CONTRACT COULD SHORTLY BE COMPLETED. DUTCH UNDERSTOOD, HOWEVER, THAT CONTRACT IMPOSSIBLE PENDING US DECISION BECAUSE OF IRANIAN INSISTANCE ON BUYING US FOR PURPOSES OF COMPATIBILITY. SUBSEQUENTLY, MAY 30, GENERAL TOUFANIAN ASKED ME ABOUT STATUS OF US CONSIDERATION, AND SAID HE WISHED TO REPORT TO THE SHAH BEFORE VISIT OF DUTCH MINISTER (IMPLICATION WAS MINISTER OF DEFENSE) EARLY IN JUNE. I TOLD TOUFANIAN NO DECISION HAD AS YET BEEN MADE, BUT THAT I WOULD INQUIRE ABOUT STATUS.

3. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN BY NOW TEHRAN 5173, CONTAINING MISSION ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION THAT USG APPROVE REQUESTED SALE OF US EQUIPMENT FOR IIN FRIGATES. IT CONFIDENTIAL

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SHOULD BE STRESSED THAT THESE 12 FRIGATES WILL REPLACE 11 OBSOLESCENT ESCORT VESSELS CURRENTLY IN USE. FOR ME THE MOST TELLING POINT REVOLVES AROUND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR IRANIAN RESOURCES, MOST IMPORTANTLY HUMAN, IF US EQUIPMENT IS A PART OF THE IRANIAN FRIGATES. TRAINING WOULD BE EASIER, INTEROPERABILITY FULLER AND MORE EFFECTIVE, MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS EASIER, LOGISTIC REQUIREMENTS FAR LESS COMPLEX; CLEARLY, IT WOULD BE EASIER AND REQUIRE LESS ON THE IRANIAN SIDE. AN ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION, WHICH PARTICULARLY CONCERNS ME, IS THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE LESS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF US PRESENCE TO ASSIST THE IRANIANS WITH THE EQUIPMENT. I VIEW THAT A A DISTINCT PLUS, SINCE ONE OF MY CENTRAL CHARGES IS TO ENSURE THE LOWEST POSSIBLE US PROFILE IN CONNECTION WITH IRAN'S MILITARY MODERNIZATION EFFORTS.

4. OBVIOUSLY, IT IS NOT FOR ME TO TOOT A HORN IN SUPPORT OF DUTCH SHIPYARDS, BUT I WOULD GUESS THAT FROM A BROAD NATO STANDPOINT IT WOULD BE IN OUR INTEREST TO ASSIST THE DUTCH IN SOMETHING THAT THEY CLEARLY VIEW AS CRITICAL.

5. I WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING SOONEST A REPORT ON WHERE THINGS STAND WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF THE GOI REQUEST FOR US EQUIPMENT FOR THE IIN FRIGATES. AS NOTED ABOVE, I BELIEVE THE ANSWER IS CLEAR, AND THAT A POSITIVE DECISION IS DECIDEDLY IN THE US INTEREST FROM MANY STANDPOINTS.

6. I WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE KNOWING WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO SPEED UP AVAILABILITY OF THE MARK 13 LAUNCHER IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SIZEABLE ORDER THAT IS CONTEMPLATED FOR THE IIN FRIGATES. THIS COULD OBVIOUSLY BE DONE IF THE MANUFACTURER IS PREPARED TO ESTABLISH A SECOND PRODUCTION LINE.
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